

Nostalgic Jackson County

A Driving Tour



Come away with us...

Come tour a land so rich with scenic beauty that it restores your spirit and refreshes your soul. Explore this land that is so deeply drenched in historical heritage that it inspires you to imagine those yesterdays. This brochure was created to be used as a guide to direct you to some of Jackson County's favorite landmarks. The sites included are only a fraction of the treasures that this magnificent county has to offer so you are encouraged to stop by the Jackson County Visitor Center in Seymour for additional information on locations to complement this driving tour. You are cordially invited to come away with us...relax, take your time, and enjoy the drive. Look around and see why we are so proud of

OUR Jackson County.

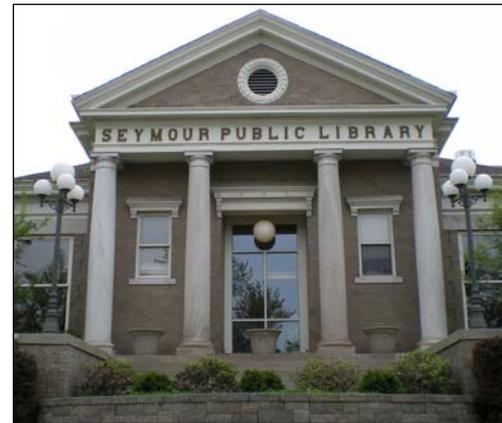
- Start at Jackson County Visitor Center at 100 North Broadway Street in Seymour

◆ **The freight house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. This freight house, built around 1890 by the Southern Indiana Railway Company, became the home of the Jackson County Visitor Center in 2008. The building was originally constructed for warehouse services for the Pennsylvania and the Baltimore & Ohio rail lines. Although the house was designated for freight only, there is record of at least one human passenger wherein a slave arranged for friends to ship him in a box to Cincinnati, Ohio, in order to free himself from slavery. In transit, his box was damaged, and he was revealed in this freight house.**^{1,2,3}



- Turn right from parking lot onto Broadway Street
- Turn left at first stoplight onto East Second Street
- Turn left at second stoplight onto North Walnut Street
- Turn right into parking lot of Jackson County Public Library

◆ **The library building at the current site in Seymour is a Carnegie library built using funds provided by Andrew Carnegie. The building opened January 5, 1905, and its west reading room was changed into a room for children's use in 1915. In 1928, new adult stacks and a children's room were added. Also added at the time was the H. Vance Swope Memorial Art Gallery, a memorial to Swope, a Crothersville-born artist who previously lived in Seymour. The gallery was used for Red Cross work during World War II. While various artwork is still visible in the library, the gallery is now being used to house part of**



the library's book collection. The library was renovated and expanded in 1992 and again in 2005.⁴

- Leave parking lot by same entrance, turning right onto North Walnut Street
- Turn left onto St. Louis Avenue immediately after railroad tracks—**CAUTION:** The railroad tracks split St. Louis Avenue with a one-way lane on each side of the tracks.

- After one block, cross North Chestnut Street
- Park in spots available on right and left
- Walk toward corner of St. Louis Avenue and South Chestnut Street

• See Greater Seymour Chamber of Commerce

◆ **The Greater Seymour Chamber of Commerce building, formerly known as the Farmers Club, was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. The Farmers Club, chartered and dedicated in 1914, was built by the heirs of the Blish Milling Company and was a gift to the county's farming community. When farmers from outlying areas would**



bring their families to town, the house was used as a resting place to refresh themselves before continuing with their day of business in downtown Seymour. This building, with its prime location and ornate façade, also has elegantly served as a public gathering place for such notable occasions as the presidential campaign visits of John F. Kennedy (1960) and Robert F. Kennedy (1968).^{3,5,6}

- See sidewalk memorial to John Mellencamp

- ◆ Located near the present Greater Seymour Chamber of Commerce is a marker commemorating Seymour native John Mellencamp. The musician was born in Seymour on October 7, 1951. In addition to filming parts of some of his music videos in Seymour, Mellencamp also brought cameras to Jackson County to film parts of the movie "Falling from Grace." Mellencamp owns the building where the Southern Indiana Center for the Arts, a place of art exhibition and education, is located; some of Mellencamp's own artwork can be viewed there. John Mellencamp became an inductee in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on March 10, 2008.^{7,8}

- See sign commemorating first train robbery

- ◆ The world's first train robbery occurred on Saturday, October 6, 1866, at approximately 6:20 p.m. The gang consisted of John and Simeon Reno as well as Frank Sparks. Their take was \$18,058. They were all arrested. Incidentally, John Reno was brakeman on the O & M and gleaned quite a bit of much-needed information.

The world's second train robbery occurred on November 17, 1867, in Gallatin, Missouri. Their take was \$23,618. This gang consisted of John Reno, Frank Sparks, Dan and Silas Smith, and Burdett Clifton. Silas Smith was the first one arrested in Gallatin. Reno and Sparks were later arrested and placed in the Gallatin Jail on December 6, but were then returned to Indiana. Frank Sparks was cleared of the charges; however, John Reno was originally sentenced to 40 years, but the sentence was later reduced to 25 years. This was a blessing in disguise because it kept him from being able to run with his brothers and commit more train robberies. The world's third train robbery occurred on May 22, 1868, in the small town of Marshfield, 17 miles south of Seymour. Their haul was \$96,000. The gang consisted of Volney Elliott, Charles Roseberry, and Clifton. They were arrested and sent to a jail in Cincinnati, Ohio, for safekeeping.⁵



John Reno

- Returning to vehicle, continue on St. Louis Avenue until turning right at stop sign onto Jeffersonville Avenue
- Turn right onto US 50/West Tipton Street
- Continue on US 50/West Tipton Street, noting Hangman's Crossing at flashing light when leaving town at approximately 2.5 miles

- ◆ In response to all of the robberies (and a rape/murder that happened that had nothing to do with the Reno Gang), the Jackson County Vigilance Committee was formed. They also went by the "Masked Halters" moniker. The gang that committed the third train robbery was placed on a train for transport back to the jail in Brownstown for their court sentencing. Approximately 200 to 250 feet south of Second Street Road and the B & O railroad crossing, while the train was stopped for wood and water, masked men boarded the train and dragged Elliott, Clifton, and Roseberry from the train and hanged them from a nearby beech tree at approximately 10:00 p.m. where they were found by the owner of that property the next day. On July 25, 1868, while en route to the jail in Brownstown, the Masked Halters hanged Frank Sparks, John Moore, and Henry Jerrell from the same limb of the same beech tree that had been used in the previous lynching. That area is still known to this day as "Hangman's Crossing." Later, on December 12, 1868, the Masked Halters visited the New Albany jail and took the cell keys from the guard at gunpoint and dragged Frank, Simeon, and William Reno as well as Charles Anderson from their cells and hanged them from the bars of the upper tier of cells. The body of Charles Anderson was to be returned to Canada for burial. The bodies of Frank, Simeon, and William Reno were buried in the Seymour Cemetery which is located at the intersection of Ninth and Ewing Streets. The area is marked.⁵

- Stop at Indian Treaty Corner Historical Marker on right soon after passing Hangman's Crossing

- ◆ Early white settlers into Jackson County would have encountered various Iroquoian-speaking Native American tribes—the Delaware, Potawatomi, Shawnee, and, mainly, Miamis, just to name a few. During the first decade of the 1800's, then Indiana Territory Governor William Henry Harrison negotiated treaties with the residing tribes in which the Native Americans ceded tracts of land to the United States in return for monetary compensation. This historical marker was placed in 1966 to commemorate the junction of the Grouseland Treaty and the Fort Wayne Treaty and the importance of these such treaties in the early settlement of Indiana.^{9,10,11}

- Continue west on US 50 for approximately 4.5 miles, staying in right lane when road becomes two lanes

- Turn right onto CR 200 N

- Stop at Shields' Mill Bridge at approximately 0.5 mile

- ◆ Commonly known as the Shieldstown Covered Bridge, the Shields' Mill Bridge was built by J. J. Daniels in 1876. The 355-foot-long bridge crosses the East Fork of the White River and has a multiple king post design with the Burr Arch Truss system. The bridge no longer supports traffic.^{7,12}

- Turn around near bridge, turning left onto CR 200 N to return to US 50

- Turn right onto US 50

- After approximately 4.2 miles, turn left at first stoplight in Brownstown onto Walnut Street



- Park near courthouse
- See Jackson County Courthouse

◆ **Brownstown was named the permanent government seat in Jackson County by the county commissioners on August 6, 1816. While previous ones have been constructed, the current Jackson County courthouse has been in use since May 19, 1911, its tower and clock destroyed by fire caused by lightning in July 1959. The tower was reconstructed from 1959 to 1960. Inside the courthouse are Karl Reibold murals commemorating the Battle of Tipton Island and Fort Vallonia. On the front lawn of the courthouse are several items of interest, including a tank and two veterans memorials, one dedicated to Jackson County veterans and one, dated 1930, to "World War" veterans. In addition, there is a historical marker with one side dedicated to Colonel John Ketcham and the other commemorating the time capsule that is buried in the front lawn of the courthouse.**^{13,14,15,16}



- Walk somewhat east of courthouse to Jackson County Historical Society and Colonel John Ketcham Pioneer Village Complex

◆ **The Jackson County Historical Society, Inc., was chartered in 1916 as a nonprofit organization. The Historical Society's grounds are home to the Ball Memorial Museum, the Col. John Ketcham Pioneer Village, which is a replica of a village from early Jackson County history, and Livery Barn, which hosts concerts. Also present is a memorial dedicated to Revolutionary War veterans. Hours for all buildings are 9:00 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday.**^{7,17}



- Returning to vehicle, continue driving around courthouse square making right turns until coming to intersection with US 50
- Turn left onto US 50
- Turn right at next stop light, in order to continue on US 50
- Turn left onto SR 135 S at flashing yellow light
- Turn right onto Main Street in Vallonia at approximately 3.3 miles
- Parking on side of road, stop at Fort Vallonia on right side of Main Street
 - ◆ **The French settled Vallonia in the late 1700s. At Indiana governor William Henry Harrison's order, a fort was built to provide protection for the 90 families in the area, circa 1810. The first Fort Vallonia Day Celebration took place in 1969. In 1972, dedication of the museum took place, and posts for**

the gates were set to swing. The pavilion with a stage was built in 1985. The Garrison house was completed in 1991. The annual Fort Vallonia Days Festival takes place on the third weekend in October, and money is raised to maintain the upkeep of the fort and grounds. To tour the Fort Vallonia Museum, call 812-358-3137.¹⁸



- Continue on Main Street to cross SR 135 S onto CR 310 W, which will change to CR 275 W
- Approximately 3 miles from Fort Vallonia, Starve Hollow State Recreation Area entrance on left with access area further on left; fish hatchery further on left while tree nursery further on right
 - ◆ **Starve Hollow State Recreation Area covers about 350 acres and provides access to many types of recreation, including swimming, fishing, and camping. On the grounds is Starve Hollow Lake, which covers 145 acres, and the Nature Center. Nearby is the Driftwood State Fish Hatchery which includes nine rearing ponds for many thousands of fish. Also nearby is the Vallonia Nursery that raises many tree species for purchase by Indiana landowners as well as companies involved in land reclamation.**^{19,20}
- Turn right at stop sign onto CR 550 S
- Turn left at first stop sign onto SR 135 S
- See Burcham round barn on right—CAUTION: Round barns are on private property.
 - ◆ **The Burcham round barn has a diameter of 68 feet and was built for the Hess family from 1909 to 1910.**⁷
- Turn right onto CR 600 S
- Millport Auxiliary Landing Strip at approximately one mile on left, although may not be visible from road
 - ◆ **Once again being used as agricultural farmland, the Millport Auxiliary Landing Strip was one of five auxiliary landing fields used during 1943 and 1944 as practice landing strips for cadets being trained at Freeman Field. Part of the cadets' training was to be prepared to land and take off on various types of terrain. At the time of its use, the Millport Landing Field was basically a strip of grassy land that was kept mowed back and stationed with a mobile control tower. The portable control tower would be towed down to the strip when there was a practice scheduled and then towed back to Freeman Field at the end of the practice.**²¹
- Turn right onto CR 500 W
- See Stuckwisch round barn on left at approximately 1.7 miles—CAUTION: Round barns are on private property.
 - ◆ **The Stuckwisch round barn was built from 1910 to 1911 and was made from beech wood lumber from the Schneider sawmill in nearby Ewing.**⁷
- Turn left at stop sign onto SR 235
- Medora Covered Bridge approximately one mile on right, but continue over overpass and turn right into access area for parking, picnicking, and access to bridge
 - ◆ **The longest three-span covered bridge in the world, the Medora Covered Bridge was built in 1875 by J. J. Daniels. The East Fork of the White River flows under this 434-foot-long bridge that uses the double Burr Arch. The**



bridge has an overhang of 12 feet, and parts of it came from the Dixon quarry in nearby Fort Ritner. Having been bypassed in 1970, the bridge no longer supports traffic.⁷

- Leave access area, turning left onto SR 235
- Turn left onto SR 135 S after approximately 2.3 miles
- Turn right onto US 50 after approximately 4.5 miles
- **Alternate Route to Bypass Skyline Drive:** While Skyline Drive is scenic, it is also very steep, includes severe curves, and is closed during the winter. To bypass Skyline Drive in this tour:
 - Continue straight through first stoplight onto SR 250 E
 - Turn right onto CR 100E near top of hill
- **Route to Tour Skyline Drive:** The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built the shelterhouse on scenic Skyline Drive, but arsonists later burned it down. In 1986, volunteers rebuilt the shelterhouse.²² **CAUTION:** Skyline Drive is very steep, includes severe curves, and is closed during the winter. To view Skyline Drive in this tour:
 - At first stoplight, turn right onto South Main Street
 - Bear right at 'Y'
 - Turn left at first stop sign onto South Poplar Street
 - Continue for approximately 1.6 miles before entering Skyline Drive which includes various picnic areas and lookout vistas
 - First intersection, approximately 1.5 miles after entering Skyline Drive, has space for parking, picnic table, restrooms, and fire tower



- Take left road at this first intersection
- After another 0.8 mile, Tampico Vista has view, restrooms, picnic area, playground, and shelterhouse
- Turn right at stop sign onto CR 100 E
- Turn left onto CR 400 S after approximately 2.1 miles
- See St. Paul's Lutheran Church on left with parking on right



◆ **St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Wegan, is the second oldest Lutheran congregation in Jackson County, being founded on March 7, 1856. On July 23, 1871, St. Paul's became a member of the Lutheran church - Missouri Synod with which it is still affiliated to this day. The Church's present church building was dedicated on September 11, 1898.²³**

• Continue on CR 400 S for approximately 3.7 miles—**CAUTION:** CR 400 S will briefly also be SR 39. Continue straight on CR 400 S; do not veer onto SR 39.

• See former St. John's Lutheran School - Sauers South District at junction of CR 400 E and CR 400 S

◆ **Children who lived too far from the school at St. John's Lutheran Church - Sauers (the next site on the driving tour) attended this small school building which was built in 1888.²⁴**

• Turn left at stop sign onto

CR 400 E

- Cross SR 250 E, staying on CR 400 E
- One mile past SR 250 E, turn right onto CR 100 S
- Turn right onto CR 460 E to see St. John's Lutheran Church - Sauers, St. John's Lutheran School, and the former school, now the Jackson County Lutheran Museum

◆ **St. John's Lutheran Church - Sauers, St. John's Lutheran School, and the Jackson County Lutheran Museum are located in an area of Jackson County now known as Sauers. St. John's has been associated with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod since 1858. While a school has been near the church for many years, two branch schools were created, the "North District" in 1869 and the "South District" in 1888, to serve children who lived too far to attend the school located near the church. Located in the former school building across the road from the church is the Jackson County Lutheran Museum, opened in 2008. To schedule a tour of the museum, call the school office at 812-523-3131.²⁴**

- Continue on CR 460 E until turning left at yield sign onto CR 475 E
- Turn right at stop sign onto CR 100 S
- Stay on CR 100 S for about three miles, passing one yield sign
- Turn left at first stop sign onto SR 11
- At approximately 2.2 miles, turn left at stop sign at CR 850 E and CR 100 N in order to continue on SR 11
- At about one mile, turn left at CR 200 N in order to continue on SR 11



- Turn right in order to continue on SR 11—CAUTION: CR 200 N continues straight, but SR 11 turns right; continue on SR 11.
- Turn left soon after railroad tracks into Freeman Field at curved, tan brick sign, onto B Avenue
- When road splits, stay on B Avenue by going straight, following signs for museum
- Turn left onto 6th Avenue
- Turn right onto A Avenue
- Continue on A Avenue to Freeman Army Airfield Museum on right with parking on left



◆ **The airfield at Freeman Field was constructed between May 1942 and February 1943. Activated on December 1, 1942, Freeman Field's main purpose was to teach American pilots how to fly twin engine planes. More than 4,200 pilots graduated here, and 500 Tuskegee Airmen were also stationed here. Freeman Field was also used for the examination of captured airplanes and was the first army helicopter training base in the United States. The City of Seymour received Freeman Field in 1947. The Freeman Army Airfield Museum, dedicated to Freeman Field's military history, is located at 1035 A Avenue at the Freeman Municipal Airport. The museum is normally open 9:00 a.m. to noon on Saturday. To arrange a tour at another time, contact the airport manager's office at 812-522-2031 during business hours, or, after business hours and on weekends, call 812-524-9440.**^{25,26,27}

- Continue on A Avenue until it ends at E Avenue West
- Turn right onto E Avenue West
- Turn left at stop sign onto Airport Road, labeled as 1st Avenue
- Turn right onto McDonald Street Road
- Turn right at stop sign onto Kasting Road at end of McDonald Street Road
- Turn left when Kasting Road becomes Wendemere Drive
- Turn left onto South Poplar Street at end of Wendemere Drive
- Turn right at stop sign onto South Park Drive
- After crossing SR 11/South Walnut Street at stop sign, enter parking lot on left, on south side of Gaiser Park
- See Jackson County Veterans Memorial on west side of Gaiser Park
 - ◆ **Dedicated on May 31, 2004, and located in Gaiser Park, this monument was created to show thanks to the men and women who have served or are serving the United States. The memorial includes bricks that have the names of some of those servicemen and women.**^{7,28}



- Turn right out of parking lot onto South Park Drive
- Turn right at stop sign onto SR 11/South Walnut Street
- Continue on SR 11/South Walnut Street until turning right at first stoplight onto US 50/West Tipton Street
- Turn left at second stoplight onto South Broadway Street
- Turn right into Jackson County Visitor Center parking lot just past railroad tracks, ending tour

Sources

- 1 *Jackson County Jaunts*, vol. 11, issue 1, Jan/Feb 2008
- 2 Tina Stark
- 3 www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com
- 4 *Jackson County Public Library History: A Century of Service*
- 5 *The First Documented History of Jackson County, Indiana, 1816-1976, Vol. I* by Edwin J. Boley
- 6 Farmers Club leaflet by Tina Stark
- 7 *Discover Jackson County Visitor's Guide* produced by Jackson County Visitor Center
- 8 www.rockhall.com
- 9 Indian Treaty Corner Historical Marker
- 10 *The World Book Encyclopedia, 2006 edition*, vol.10
- 11 http://208.119.135.17/db/markers_test/markers_display.asp?ID=146
- 12 Fleeta Arthur
- 13 *The Composite History of Jackson County, Indiana, 1816-1988: Bicentennial Edition* by Loren W. Noblitt
- 14 *Seymour Daily Tribune*, July 2, 1959
- 15 Plaque in Jackson County Courthouse
- 16 *Brownstown Banner*, April 25, 1934
- 17 Jackson County Historical Society brochure
- 18 www.fortvalloniadays.com
- 19 <http://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/6411.htm>
- 20 <http://www.jacksoncountyin.com/AgMap.htm>
- 21 Ted Jordan
- 22 <http://www.usi.edu/hsi/resources/view.asp?id=17>
- 23 St. Paul's Lutheran Church bulletin
- 24 *St. John's Sauers 150th Anniversary*
- 25 Freeman Army Airfield Fact Sheet
- 26 Freeman Army Airfield Museum brochure
- 27 www.freemanfield.org
- 28 Jackson County Veterans Memorial brochure

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MAP NOT TO SCALE

Jackson County Visitor Center, Jackson County Public Library, & Farmers Club

Hangman's Crossing & Indian Treaty Corner Historical Marker

Jackson County Veterans Memorial

Freeman Army Airfield Museum

Shields' Mill Bridge

Jackson County Courthouse & Jackson County Historical Society

Alternate Route to Bypass Skyline Drive

Skyline Drive

St. John's Lutheran Church - Sauers, St. John's Lutheran School, & Jackson County Lutheran Museum

Fort Vallonia

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Wegan

St. John's Lutheran School - Sauers South District

Medora Covered Bridge

Stuckwisch round barn

Starve Hollow State Recreation Area

Burcham round barn

Millport Auxiliary Landing Strip

